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ABSTRACT

This series of magazine articles stresses ways in which educational institutions can use direct mail advertising to promote lectures, concerts, and other programs to off-campus audiences. The application of direct mail principles to selling education is suggested, and the advantages and disadvantages of direct mailings by colleges and universities are discussed. Successful techniques for advertising are described, with emphasis on their use by educational institutions. Ideas for compiling and evaluating mailing lists are given to ensure maximum community support. (RS)

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How Colleges, Universities, and other Educational Institutions can use Direct Mail more effectively

to promote lectures, concerts and fine arts programs for off-campus audiences

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REPRINT OF A SERIES OF MAGAZINE ARTICLES WRITTEN BY GLENN. L. ANDERSON

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How Direct Mail Can Build Public Support for College— If You Know How To Use It

YOU'RE in the direct mail business but you may not know it. Many concerts, plays, student performances, classes and other programs depend on attracting off-campus audiences. The more your institution becomes part of the community, the greater the variety of such programs, the greater your dependence on direct mail to seek out your audiences.

Furthermore, as an educational institution you have unique advantages in the use of direct mail, including unusually lower cost. Yet, most of the printing pouring out of colleges and universities seems to reflect a "take it or leave it" attitude. At the prices you're paying for today's printing, why not make it work better? If you don't need the income, you are unique.

If you don't need the community support that can be built through large audiences attending campus events, you only think you're unique. You may soon be extinct.

Too many college announcements simply give the title of a lecture or name of a concert artist, dates, place and ticket prices — no mail order ticket form, no details of the unusual reasons why your faculty committee considers this program stimulating or enjoyable. "Take it or leave it"; "Show up at the box office if you're interested," these announcements say, in effect.

But there's a good chance that for every two persons who remember the date and show up on the performance night, there are at least two more persons who were convinced about the program and would have ordered tickets by mail.

Some program planners who don't want to be bothered say, "Anyone who is really interested will come without much urging." But if you want to make every event more successful, remember that at the moment of reading, the moment when interest, desire and conviction about the program have reached the hottest point, that's the right moment to make it easy to act and get your prospects to commit themselves to attendance. Better to believe that those who are "really interested" will come no matter how *much* you say than to say so little that you lose a larger segment of your potential audience. Use of a mail order coupon that is made to look like everybody is clipping and mailing it should be standard procedure.

Shortcomings of some college advertising can be traced back to the time when such promotion started out as a part-time activity, then gradually expanded to full time but without professional personnel.

In the beginning someone probably said, "All it takes is a little common sense to announce our public programs." But professionals in advertising, as well as in other management practices, are not paid for common sense but for their *uncommon sense*. *Uncommon sense* is the major ingredient which some management consultants apply to cut costs or improve production by hundreds of thousands of dollars in a variety of dissimilar companies and industries. They enter a company, analyze existing operations, and apply principles of efficient management.

Applying *uncommon sense* to direct mail selling of education can also bring magical results. So-called common sense says, "Colleges should not *sell* cultural or educational programs." *Uncommon sense* says, "Selling need *not* involve unethical advertising language or superlative promises that create dissatisfaction in audiences. Instead, a straightforward description of the content, meaning and value of an educational or cultural program can sell *more* of the right audience, and guarantee satisfaction to that audience." (If your programing does not reflect this quality, then the programing needs improvement.)

In the area of public lectures and extension programs for off-campus audiences, *uncommon sense* says, "Education — learning about any subject — can be made exciting, dramatic and appealing to those who have an interest in the subject. Lots of specific information will attract that specific audience. An equal amount of general information can never excite *all* of the public; so don't try."

The optimum result you may want from a program may be a small, sophisticated audience for a high-level program or a full auditorium for others. Whether your objective is optimum audience quality or optimum ticket sales, the application of the uncommon sense of professional direct mail experience can improve your current promotional efforts.

Common sense might say, "There's no use mailing the same mailing piece one semester after another — we need a new approach for programs that are repeated." *Uncommon sense* proves not only that you *can* use the same mailer (with date changed) but that you *should* use it.

Common sense says, "Drop old names from your mailing list." But *uncommon sense* may investigate deeper and prove that by doing so you might have thrown away as much as 25 per cent of your business.

Here are a few more samples of the application of direct mail principles to selling education:

- If you want to sell more, tell more. Long copy sells more than short copy.
- A self-mailer may cost the least in printing and mailing, but may not necessarily ring up ticket sales at the lowest cost per ticket sold.
- If unit ticket price is too low to pay the costs of direct mail selling, you can increase the unit of sale in several ways other than a reduction for quantity purchases.
- When your initial concert announcement has only partially sold out the auditorium, then properly planned emergency mailings can still convert half-empty houses into a large successful attendance.
- Direct mail selling costs can be reduced by selling *series* tickets even on dissimilar programs.
- Your present customers can help you increase your mailing lists, and in turn increase your audiences.
- Improved readability of copy and layout can increase read-through of your message by 10 to 25 per cent.
- Bizarre layouts and irrelevant art can cut returns to a fraction of your full potential.
- In your theater programs and extension catalog, proper wording and use of display pages to announce special programs can replace part of your special mailings and attract as much as half your audience. This enables you to reduce the quantity of the special announcements printed and mailed.

In forthcoming articles, these uncommon principles and other ideas that make direct mail more effective will be discussed.

I hope to make clear the reasoning behind the many elements that are combined to make the mailings successful, and spell out exactly how the same general principles can be applied successfully to your own promotions. You may be able to discover here and there some of the errors that are turning away audiences and income. Future articles will deal with such subjects as how to utilize the unique advantages — and overcome some disadvantages — of your direct mail as compared to commercial direct mail. Later we will discuss copy that sells; emergency actions that may double your audience; how to adapt a variety of formats to a variety of audiences; research to guarantee continued success; how to keep your prospect reading until he is convinced he should act; the care and feeding of mailing lists, and any other mail advertising problems readers might suggest. ■

College Mailings Face Harder Task Than Commercial, But Have Own Advantages

MOST universities rely heavily on mailing announcements for their audiences for lectures, concerts, films and other cultural events aimed at the off-campus public. Persuading one individual to do something when you are talking face to face is a fairly difficult job. But, it is easy compared to persuading many unseen individuals by means of a message printed on a page or in a letter.

Your mailing announcements are direct mail advertising and, compared with most other advertising, direct mail is different in that it must ask for an order; it must be aimed at persuading many individuals and obtaining a decision to come to your campus box office, or to order tickets by mail.

Successful direct mail therefore must tell a full story and answer all questions and objections likely to arise in the minds of most readers. That's asking a lot, particularly when university and college direct mail usually asks for the big decision: Send money now — in advance.

Other direct mail, you will find by simply reviewing the last few pieces you have received, emphasizes no decision now; just a tiny bit of favorable action of a sort made easy for you to do, and - of course, you "send no money."

Let us compare the factors involved with commercial direct mail and our own, the better then to overcome some of our disadvantages, and to exploit our very real advantages.

Terms of the Offer and Format

Commercial Direct Mail: Send no money or a small deposit. Twenty years and more of mail order records show that if you can get 50 orders based on "send no money — pay later on approval" then you will get only 35 orders based on "send no money now, just pay the postman C.O.D." When you sell on the basis of "cash in advance with the order," the number of orders has dwindled to 25.

University Direct Mail: Usually "cash in advance now with the order".

Commercial: Mail the separate postage-free reply card after you simply put a check mark in the square. Letter used with the most personal approach, in an envelope with a separate folder and reply envelope.

University: Fill out a complete coupon which is part of a folder. Clip the coupon, find pen, fill in the information, write check, find envelope, address it, find stamp. Sometimes enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the reply. Usually economy demands a self-mailer.

Commercial: Pay after approval. Guaranteed money back if, not "absolutely delighted."
University: Approve now based on the information furnished, and send full payment now. Limited refund policy, if any.

Commercial: Nearly always a bargain or special price. Usually an additional premium if you act now.
University: Not possible.

Commercial: Test many different formats and advertising appeals before proceeding with the full mailing.
University: Time does not permit testing on the same scale.

Copywriting in Direct Mail

Commercial: Headlines dramatize benefits to the individual.
University: Usually an academic title, although an interesting subtitle can sometimes be added.

Commercial: Direct emotional appeals to sex, romance, health, comfort, profit, self-advancement, social prestige.
University: Limited in appeal to culture, educational value, indirectly in terms of self-advancement.

Commercial: Written person to person.
University: Sometimes addressed directly to the reader to act and benefit, but often must be addressed to a company, training director, principal, student counselor, or other person who then must select or persuade the prospect you are trying to reach – therefore difficult to aim copy in readable style.

This comparison should convince you that direct mail must have a lot of what it takes to win favorable action. The comparison demonstrates how average commercial direct mail says: "Don't decide now, don't worry about paying, you're not doing anything that commits you; just make that easy little check mark next to where we have already filled in your name. Never mind a stamp, we pay the postage. You're not even buying anything because you can return it so very easily without risking a penny."

Don't despair. University and college direct mail has certain other advantages that many an advertiser would take in trade for all the advantages he seems to have.

For example, the average advertiser must invest much more in getting attention. Then, having attention, the advertiser must use devices and stratagems in words, layout and art to make sure prospects read his message from beginning to end. Also, advertisers must convince the reader that the advertiser is worthy of the confidence of the prospect. And, all this he must do ahead of and to the exclusion of many competitors.

In the realm of persuasion, in the long tricky road from initial attention through interest, desire and conviction to action, many a prospect drops off on the way. In these abstract areas, college direct mail has unique advantages. Here are some of them:

1. Our unique product is education, including cultural entertainment. If the reader has any knowledge of the subject, we have a better chance of getting his very favorable attention.

2. Those who have asked to be put on your mailing list – have demonstrated a special interest in what you have to say – will hear you out, listen to your full story, if you give them half a chance.

3. What the university is doing is news. One of the most important elements in advertising is just that: the news element.

4. Because you offer news from a university, your reader expects the news itself will be educational. *The reader expects some worthwhile knowledge just from reading your announcement regardless of whether or not he attends the program you are telling him about.*

5. The other advertisers are obviously out to "sell a bill of goods." Your readers think of the university as disinterested, offering nonprofit education or entertainment.

All of these qualities make it easier to achieve conviction in the mind of the prospect that your proposal is worthwhile. The average advertiser pleads, begs, entreats the prospect to believe in his product, and then become convinced that he must act. Your public believes in you, he is convinced of the quality, reputation, honesty of you and your offer.

Combine the unusual advantages that we enjoy with full consideration of the other differences between our direct mail and commercial direct mail, and you have a combination of technics that will seem to work magic in improved results and income.

Direct mail can be an expensive, even a prohibitive, way of doing business when it is not understood and not properly planned. Successful direct mail follows certain broad principles. In most cases, the measure of success is the number of tickets you sell, and this result will be most often mentioned in these articles. But the test of effectiveness, and the reason for making direct mail more effective, can be represented by other goals than money and income. The objective may be a small but highly qualified audience. Once you have improved your direct mail, you may be able to upgrade the quality of your programs and of your audiences. ■

Tell More To Sell More Is Good Rule for Education's Direct Mail Advertising

THIS article is the third in our series on the use of professional direct mail advertising technics in the promotion of on-campus cultural programs, lectures and classes designed for off-campus audiences.

How can we talk about professional direct mail and the professional approach?

We can do so if we have a backlog of successful experiments to show that favorable results have been proved. When you plan for results and trace those results, you soon learn by experience and intuition born of that experience just what works and what does not work.

This is not to say that direct mail professionals can always predict the winner in a test of several mailing pieces or letters; but, comparing a mailing piece that has none of the ingredients of successful persuasion to those that do contain them, experienced advertisers predict which is more likely to succeed.

In the 1930s, years of very hard selling, two brothers Townsend electrified the advertising profession when they announced that they had discovered 30 ingredients that an ad must possess to be successful. Many advertising agencies scoffed, but they and others were forced by clients to submit their ads for secret analysis. In most cases, the Townsend formula of success did improve ad results. The secret selling points leaked out in varied forms. The important lesson is that such formulas can be deduced from the teachings of many advertising geniuses.

So, when we come to a consideration of effective copy writing, we could readily reprint the writings of Claude Hopkins, Ernest Elmo Calkins, James Webb, John Caples, Clyde Bedell, David Ogilvy, and many others. But for the reader who is limited in time, I would suggest Clyde Bedell's "How To Write Advertising That Sells." His "34 Proven Selling Stratagems" for commercial products can be applied to the abstract area of education and cultural entertainment.

The transference is not easy to achieve, but those who persist in comparing our educational "product" and our technics of selling with others will be rewarded with more and more people coming to the campus to experience the thrill of learning or the greater appreciation of the arts.

In addition to needing more of the copy elements that sell, most college announcements can be improved in readability through an application of the teachings of Rudolf Flesch.

Advertising textbooks can tell you *what to say*, and this advice will help you sell many more people. But your copy can produce greater success if you follow the advice of Rudolph Flesch on "how to say it." Simple words, human references, short sentences make up the Flesch formula for readability that editors of newspapers and magazines have applied with startling success.

Before we walk through a demonstration of writing copy, here are a few other principles to consider:

1. Long copy will sell more than short copy.

2. Don't talk generally to the general public. Few programs have that broad an appeal. Pick out who your prospects are so you can talk to them in specific language about specific features.

3. Every average subject, no matter how dull it may seem to you, is exciting and interesting to its fans. Talk to these fans with their enthusiasm, and you will persuade them as well as others marginally interested.

4. Start where your prospect is. Begin with the familiar before describing the new and unfamiliar aspects of the subject.

5. Avoid "advertisingese." Windy superlatives, extreme claims, and exaggerations only produce dissatisfied customers.

6. At the other extreme, avoid pretentiousness, fine writing, abstractions where the writer forgets he is a salesman and tries to be a performer. Instead of sales, he seeks applause — and usually gets only his own and that of a flattering friend or two.

7. Don't try to be cute. There is plenty of entertainment in the funny papers and on TV. If you want to sell, be straightforward, honest, serious.

8. Verify your basic assumptions. You have some surprises coming. For example, ask a few people, "Have you ever been to a concert on our campus?" Some will answer, "I thought they were only open to students and faculty." Ask others, "Have you ever taken extension classes?" And your next-door neighbor may surprise you with, "But don't you have to be a college graduate?"

This bit of research should teach you to feature prominently such words as, "Open to the public," "Public lectures," and to repeat this message by paraphrasing, "A lecture series for the layman and all those interested in understanding today's scientific advances" or "A concert for all lovers of string quartets." This research should also start you seeking out new lists of people to tell them that they should not have the mistaken conceptions you have discovered in part of your public.

How do you adapt the principles of good copy writing to talking about concerts, lectures and other educational and cultural programs?

Here are a few pointers:

Your copy must be written in terms of benefits to the reader – what the reader gets or experiences. First, your title is your headline. It is the most important element in an advertisement because it forms the reader's decision whether to go on and read or stop there. Now, in many situations you are given an academic title that you can't change. But you can supplement it with a subtitle that arrests more attention, promises definite benefits in entertainment or education.

Then, immediately, go into details about the program, details that carry forward the ideas given in the headline. Don't write literary essays. Talk to people. In order to get interesting material for your body copy, question the performing artists or lecturers. They have an enthusiasm for their subject. That same enthusiasm is shared by other people who, so far, exist only "way out there somewhere" and have not yet become an audience. But keep pumping for answers to the questions: "Why should part of our public drop everything and rush to attend this performance?" "What's so great about it?"

Most times, the enthusiasm of the performer or the lecturer for his subject can be transformed into a description that transmits the enthusiasm to the public, and you get a good attendance.

Most of the people who plan these programs have spent a half hour or more with the person who will present the program, and often their reaction has been, "He makes it sound so very interesting and fascinating, I am going to be sure to attend myself." *That's* the kind of enthusiasm to pick up and put on paper to persuade more people to attend.

Will this copy approach work for concerts, recitals and other campus cultural events designed to attract off-campus audiences? Try it. Use short copy in a test against longer copy. Properly written longer copy will usually outsell brief "announcement" copy.

Remember the advantages you have over other mail advertisers. Your public considers your announcements educational and worthwhile news.

In the case of musical performances, don't hesitate – in the preliminary announcement – to give some details about some of the compositions or composers in addition to material about the artists. Why save all the exciting and interesting notes for the performance program where half your audience arrives too late to read it? Take a new look at those notes.

In selling a product, there comes a point in the persuasion process where you picture to the prospect the enjoyment that comes from using the product. It is as if the prospect is now in your audience and your words assume he is there starting to enjoy the program.

Try to meet the reader on his own ground — who are our prospects and what do they already know about the subject?

When a bookseller tries to sell you a book through the mail, the one bit of copy he always includes is the table of contents. It may not look pretty in the layout, and to those only mildly interested it may seem to take up too much space. But those who have an active interest are not about to part with their money without judging whether the contents promise more than books already read on the same subject.

Don't use the biography of the lecturer as given in "Who's Who" with all the dull details starting with where he got his B.A. degree. Instead, rewrite the biography to answer this question: "What unique experiences and knowledge qualify this specific person to talk on this specific program?"

Emphasize how to enroll in a course, also that it is open to the public.

Since the series is for the layman, strongly infer that attendance by more than one person is expected – bring a friend, suggest a husband and wife enroll together.

You get more multiple enrollments when the enrollment blank suggests it by providing spaces to fill in the names of "other persons covered by this enrollment."

Besides copy, other factors that make for success or failure of your direct mail are readability, format, lists and research, which will be discussed in future articles. ■

Readability Studies Provide Ground Rules To Make Your Advertising More Effective

THE more people who read your announcements of on-campus events, the more your public following will increase.

The title of a lecture, or name of a performing artist, may be all you need to bring in orders for tickets from a few enthusiasts. Stop there, if you want to, but you haven't even started getting the most for your printing money. Each bit of good information that you add will attract a few more.

You will get optimum results if you can keep more people reading through to the end of your message.

Lawrence G. Chait, a counselor in mail advertising and selling, says of direct mail readership: "Marketing people who are exposed for the first time to direct mail readership studies are generally shocked to find that a piece of direct mail will be *seen/identified* by the prospect group to an extent four or five times greater than that accorded to the same advertisement in a newspaper or magazine representing a circulation audience of equal size.

"In specific terms, direct mail readership normally is in the 65 per cent to 85 per cent range, as against the 10 per cent to 20 per cent figure which generally emerges for print media advertising of other types."

This is not to play down the effectiveness of other media. Rather it is to anticipate the unscientific and subjective reaction: "I never read business mail. I don't think anybody reads direct mail." The people who know how wrong you are, if you are addicted to this fallacy, are laughing at you — all the way to the bank.

Nevertheless, more attention can be given profitably to getting more people to read through to the end of your message. The more who do read all the way through, the more will buy.

A survey made years ago focuses attention on the importance of read-through.

A successful mail order firm mailed a thousand pieces to a sample in 10 states, then followed up with personal interviews. Here's what they found:

Out of a thousand people interviewed, 384 did not remember the letter (*it was assumed they did not open it*), 616 remembered receiving it but 393 of those 616 remembered nothing of the contents (*it was assumed they did not read it*). This totals 777, or 78 per cent who did not open or did not read any part. Two hundred and twenty-four did remember something in the letter (*it was assumed they read it*), and 34 of the 224 bought the product offered. The mailing was very profitable.

It doesn't matter whether the figure of 78 per cent nonreaders can be attributed accurately to other mailings. What does matter is the working assumption that a majority may not read our mail at all, unless we remember to make them read. Add up nonreaders and readers who did not buy, and you have 96.7 per cent of your list to work on for improved read-through.

We cannot hope to achieve 100 per cent readership unless our list is composed of 100 per cent prospects.

Quantitative readership by use of a wide general appeal is worthless, unless in that readership group are the qualitative group: the prospects. To the extent that advertising is directed specifically to the prospects, the more likely it is to pick up fringe prospects.

Readership studies of copy, layout, art and typography provide ground rules to make advertising more effective.

Ads that are already effective have been made 10 per cent to 25 per cent more effective in read-through by applying the results of research. An increase of read-through readership of 10 per cent to 25 per cent in direct mail would mean that a mailing of 5,000 will have the effect of a mailing of 5,500 to 6,250. Thus increased read-through can obtain a bonus of 10 per cent to 25 per cent for every dollar invested in advertising.

If you are serious about communicating, you need to pay attention to how easy, or difficult, it is to read and comprehend your announcements. The mass media have applied readability formulas such as those of Rudolf Flesch and Robert Gunning to great advantage. Many publishers and editors, who paid no attention to these readability formulas, have been run out of business fast.

Yet a great number of university announcements are more difficult to read than the *Yale Review*. The majority are much harder to read than *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harpers*. Is this too high a reader level for the language of your direct mail? Remember, those who pick up *Atlantic, Harpers, Yale Review* have their own motive for doing so.

But, you cannot assume any such motive when the same people pick up your advertisement.

Unless you make it easy to go on from sentence to sentence, you lose readers all along the way.

You lose readers with a word — a fancy polysyllable that you think makes your writing erudite. The reader stops, puzzles, begins to lose interest. Also, you can lose readers at the end of each complicated sentence, each paragraph, at the bottom of a page, at every point where you stop to take a breath.

Most people think of the reading level of *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harpers*, for example, as aimed at university graduates, intellectuals who will overcome any complications of long words and sentences.

You should take another look. The editors of these and other magazines are fighting for complete read-through. Set their articles next to some of your own copy. Compared to your expectations, you may now discover that their language is almost primer-like. Not so. It is the current language of clear-cut communication — putting an idea over with the least possible strain on the reader.

Many books have been written on how to make reading interesting. At the very least, find out what Flesch and Gunning are talking about, and apply some of their suggestions. If you don't, you're wasting a lot of money on printing and communication that could be more effective.

Here we are concerned not with the readership formulas, but with physical aids in format, layout and typography, which help keep people reading.

Start with the basic piece of mail — a letter from me to you. The method of reproduction of such a letter affects the degree of readership. Find out about the difference between letters reproduced by automatic typing, printing but with a matched fill-in of name and address, multigraph and straight printing. Also, learn from professional direct mail about indenting some paragraphs, numbering items in a list, marginal marks or underlines in a second color, signature in a second color, use of the P.S. (the first thing, not the last thing, most people read).

Most college and university announcements are printed folders or self-mailers, so let us look into getting maximum read-through of such printed material.

With regard to folders, self-mailers and booklets, here are some ways to make reading more attractive:

1. Use captions and subcaptions to telegraph the story for the reader who skims over the copy first before reading details.

2. If your headline is an academic title you can't change, then back it up with a subtitle that has reader interest.

3. Copy on the cover or in the headings should include all those elements that may pick a prospect out of the crowd and say: "Wait a minute, don't throw this away — this is for *you*." These elements may include title, subtitle, audience ("open to the public" or "for lovers of classical music," and so forth), dates, place, time and special features. If a lecture series includes demonstrations, slides and films, why not say so?

4. Back cover copy must be considered in exactly the same way as cover copy. *You* think you know which is your *front* cover, but watch people pick up their mail and you'll discover that both covers are important. *Look* magazine discovered that 25 per cent of magazine readers thumbed through from the back of the magazine, so they put some feature articles there!

5. With respect to art and illustration on the covers and inside, remember that the primary purpose of the layout is to achieve complete read-through. A majority of people will not buy until they have read all you have to say; never forget that. Only as art and layout contribute relevantly to this objective are they effective. This rules out most extraneous decoration, as it should be ruled out. Generally, a photograph or an illustration approaching a photograph is the most successful in attracting readers.

6. Photographs with accompanying captions are almost compulsory reading for most people. In newspapers they get two to three times more readership than text. For this reason, a photo should scarcely ever be used without a caption under it, preferably emphasizing a selling feature. With regard to pictures, readership research further tells us that in pictures used to tell a story, unusual cropping, outlining or tilt should be avoided. Captions should be placed right under the picture. Don't deface your photograph by printing a headline over the picture area itself. This can reduce attention value by an average of 19 per cent.

Layout and typography deserve as much attention as editors of mass media give them.

The editor knows that his objective is communication, and he wants complete read-through.

Do you really want maximum read-through? Then learn from research that reports 5, 10, 25 per cent, and other varying percentage drop-offs in readers when any of these rules are violated:

1. Type should be as large as the text permits — 10 point usually is used in books. You may be forced to set it smaller, but if so, try to put white spaces between the lines. Find out which type faces are larger for their size. For example, 8 point Times Roman probably appears as large as 10 point Weiss type face.

2. Typographic experts advise an average width of line equal to one and one-half alphabets or 39 characters. If you exceed this by very much, consider putting white space between lines.

3. White space should be used to make important headings and subheads stand out. Large massive type does not emphasize a title or headline as well as lesser blacks with white space.

4. Avoid long headlines of all-capital letters. They are 10 per cent

harder to read than upper and lower case.

5. Emphasize key words in a long headline by italics, boldface, or letter-spaced capitals.

6. Do not use condensed type faces for text or long copy. Condensed type faces were generally designed to meet limitations of newspaper columns; leave them there.

7. Where all caps are used in a headline or subhead, they are generally made more readable by letter-spacing between the letters.

8. Set text in the kind of type we grew up reading – the kind of type we read most of every day. That type is serif type, not sans-serif.

This article is set in serif type.

This line is set in sans-serif.

9. If your type is being set on a linotype machine, the type face comes in two varieties: sometimes Roman and italic, sometimes Roman and boldface. Learn how to use the other face judiciously to emphasize key words or to break up copy blocks.

10. Type can be used, when copy permits, to keep readers going by such methods as the following:

a. Subtitles following the heading.

b. A subtitle preceding the heading, providing the subtitle and heading are worded as a complete sentence or thought.

c. Boldface lead-in for text.

d. Indenting some paragraphs right and left in the middle of the text.

e. Setting a sentence or short paragraph in italics if that italic face is easy to read.

f. Numbering or lettering ideas in a list.

g. First paragraphs set in larger type or with more space between lines.

h. Start the text or new paragraphs with a two-line or three-line initial letter. One study says that a large initial letter will increase readership an average of 13 per cent.

i. Use decorative initials that are part of the type face used.

j. Other decorative characters (called printer's flowers) that do not distract, *e.g.* an em quad, a dot or a star in place of numerals in a listing.

k. Run-over of copy from one column or page to the next *is desirable* to keep them reading. Newcomers often space copy so that each column or page ends "neatly" with the end of a paragraph or sentence. The end of the thought makes it easy for your reader to stop thinking about what you are saying altogether, and you lose your reader.

l. Use normal book style of indenting first line of paragraphs, centering lines.

Setting type with ragged (uneven) lines at right or left is an obstacle to readership.

Here are some don'ts – they call more attention to the type and layout, and forget that the purpose of type is to communicate ideas. These are some of the cliches that crop up in cycles, are imitated badly by amateurs, and have no place especially in direct mail where the objective is to obtain action from the reader, not throw obstacles at his eyes.

Avoid: (a) unusual word-splitting; (b) excessive use of lower case only where readers expect normal capital letters; (c) heavy rules that attract more attention to themselves rather than functioning as separators of copy; (d) large heavy numerals or dates that distract from emphasis on the copy; (e) excessive type sizes; (f) jumbles of type faces; (g) text or long copy printed on colored tint blocks, lengthy reverses of type or text type in red, orange or other bright colors.

Never set your copy in reverse, that is, white type on a black background, and never set it over a gray or colored tint – they make reading virtually impossible. Surveys report a 10 per cent to 42 per cent advantage in reading of black on white *versus* white on black or on tint blocks.

Use of color for headings and subheads calls for a reconsideration of the type face to be used.

Color should be used judiciously. In the case of excessive use of display type, it is said, "All display is no display." The same principle applies to use of color.

In some cases, where a heading or subhead will appear in color, it is necessary to step up the type in size or boldness, otherwise the black text copy overpowers it.

The next article will discuss fitting the format to the task. ■

How To Choose a Format That Fits Objectives of Your Mail Campaign

WHEN we come to a consideration of formats to be used in advertising campus concerts and cultural events, then we should reconsider our objectives. If the objective for one event is to attract an ever larger public audience, one kind of format or package, for example, a self-mailer might carry our message. But, if the objective is to attract the social, political and economic leaders of the community, you may find another format brings startling results, for example, an invitation type of mailer.

The format by which you communicate to your prospective audiences covers many possibilities.

First there are the from-me-to-you personal communications: a single letter sent first class. Then there are letters personally addressed but sent in quantities. When the quantity is large enough, you can use automatically typewritten letters. To retain some personal touch to printed letters, you may match the typewriter type with a matched fill-in of the name and address of the prospect, or fill in the name in a deliberately nonmatched type. Even with no fill-in, but starting the letter "Dear Friend" or with a headline, the printed letter still can look more personal when the signature is printed in a second color.

Does it all sound too gimmicky and corny? Try some new formats, take a count of the improved ticket sales, and take a good, critical look at the new customers. Neither the extra ticket sales nor the new customers will look corny.

But, this is not a suggestion to use blatant, irrelevant formats. The format should suit the objective, the type of program, and the audience.

Bear in mind that the cost of mailing, whatever format is used, does not depend on how much you pay the printer, mailing department, and post office.

The mailer that costs most in dollars may bring in more orders and be the most economical per ticket sold. The mistaken idea about cost instead of sales per dollar spent keeps many promoters from trying out more effective formats.

Tests can point to better results. For example, if you are mailing to last year's concert season subscribers, you'll get more renewals by enclosing an addressed reply envelope with a 5 cent postage stamp affixed to the envelope. This will increase your cost of mailing by $55 to $65 a thousand to cover the stamps, affixing stamps, envelope, inserting. But try it on half your list — when the results are in you'll probably wish you had done it on the entire list.

That's one example of an improvement in format to be tested at least on prime lists. Now let's get back to general considerations.

Generally, the most effective mailing format is a letter, brochure, separate order card, and reply envelope.

The qualifying word generally is important because many individual situations contradict this principle. I will contradict it too when I talk about the invitation format a little later.

Often, letters and separate reply orders are not available to you. You receive heralds from the booking agent, and have little choice but to mail them as self-mailers or use them as throwaways. Most of these heralds made up by the booking agents and managers could stand considerable improvement in copy and application of other direct mail technics. Some, which you probably recognized, already have that professional touch and fairly certain high return in ticket orders.

Self-mailers can range in format according to the method of reproduction.

They can be mimeographed, multigraphed and printed by offset or letterpress. Generally, if you are using photographs — and you should use them on main announcements — then you will use a printing process. The self-mailers should include a tear-off order blank so that tickets can be ordered by mail.

When you are using more than one list for your mailings, you should arrange your self-mailers so that replies are automatically coded. You can tell which lists are producing the most business if your order blank is placed on the inside so that its reverse side contains the address space. Thus, by turning over each order blank, you read the addressee and identity of the list so you can tabulate results. When other formats are used, order blanks can be coded in different ways which I will describe in a subsequent article.

Self-mailers can include comparatively large sheets folded down as well as post cards and double post cards. As to the final folded size, the post office has some limitations, but another limitation often overlooked is the size of the mailboxes you're sending to. If your institution is surrounded by apartment houses, a large mailer will be folded (or crushed) to go into an apartment house mail slot, or left outside in a general pick-up box where much of the mail is not always picked up.

If ticket sales are not up to expectations, and you are quite sure it is not the fault of the concert artist or the program, don't hesitate to use a booster mailer any way you can get it out in a hurry. If the printed advance piece can't be reprinted, a mimeographed self-mailer can do the job. Switch the copy emphasis to tickets available at the box office on the night of the concert.

Emergency mailings like these have doubled the audience in more than one of our programs, and research has proved that the second and emergency mailing was mainly responsible for that audience increase.

Choice of format can do a lot in successfully attracting new audiences, and audiences made up of more of the leaders of your immediate community.

An invitation-type announcement mailed in invitation-size envelopes can do much to attract their favorable attention and attendance.

The outside panel of the invitation carries the conventional message of invitation, including artist, place, dates. At the bottom of the panel, be sure to put the scale of ticket prices so that there is no mistake that the invitation is to *buy* tickets, not to come as a guest.

Some might criticize this format — before using it — as perhaps demeaning or injuring the image of your institution or program. Quite the contrary. More leaders of the community will respond to this than to other formats. If you want steadily to build the best community support, you'll try this out soon. You'll find yourself in good and dignified company: *Harvard Business Review* has used the invitation format almost exclusively for years, as has the National Geographic Society.

The mail you receive at your own home will suggest to you the wide variety of formats. Make sure you get on direct mail lists for all types of offers, and ask yourself whether each format can be successfully adopted to your use.

Don't limit your ideas to mail samples alone.

One unusual format we have used successfully was to mail the 12 page concert program. Its primary function was as a handout at the concert itself, but the concert notes were exciting and enticing enough to bring in a record audience.

Test new formats with clear objectives in view, and use the test results to improve future mailings. ■

The Care and Tending of Prospect Lists Garners Profit and Community Support

YOU cannot expect to build steady audiences for cultural events, you cannot obtain optimum direct mail results at minimum cost unless you build, refine and expand your mailing lists. Some experts say the quality of your list determines 75 per cent of the success of your mailing. If you are not putting the names of all your patrons on regular lists, you should start doing so. If you are not adding more prospect names from all possible sources, you are letting audiences and revenue slip away. Before we discuss the specifics of college mailing lists for public events, there are two generalities that deserve mention: ZIP codes and addressing systems.

This is a good time to evaluate your mailing lists and addressing system.

This period, from the present to Jan. 1, 1967, is a particularly opportune time because of the impending requirement that all lists will have to be completely ZIP-coded by Jan. 1, 1967, or pay penalty postage. You must undertake the cost of extracting each address plate from your list file, adding the new ZIP code (or making a complete new plate to accommodate the ZIP code) and refiling the plates in numerical ZIP-code order. This cost may run as high as the cost of installing a complete new addressing system.

Now is the time to consider whether your present system does suit your present and future requirements. In normal mailing periods, the biggest obstacle to a change-over to a new, improved system of addressing is the enormous cost to convert from one type to another. But whether or not you plan to change your system, start now to ZIP-code by adding ZIP codes with each new addition or change.

Many systems are available for maintaining lists and addressing mail.

A mailing list can be established simply by typing names and addresses on index cards, then addressing individual pieces from that list. Or, you can use multiple labels and type as many as six sets of labels at one time. Or, reproduce such labels on a copying machine. From these elementary systems you can progress, as lists become larger and more complicated, to paper and metal address plates, on up to using a computer and maintaining lists on magnetic tape.

Somewhere between the two extremes you will find a mailing list system that suits your purposes. The details of each system, its advantages and disadvantages, are too many to discuss here.

The right system for you depends on the weight you give factors like the size of lists, the number of categories or codes used, the frequency of use and desirability of selecting small segments of the list. An axiom among mailing-list houses is that if you are going to use a name more than six times a year, then it pays to set up some kind of mechanical addressing system.

Perhaps you have been required to use the system already established by the administration for record purposes. Such a system may be suitable for records but not for mailing, especially since complete ZIP-coding lies just ahead. It is not impractical to install a second address system if the system offers more advantages and economy in mailing operations.

You can find complete discussions on the mechanics of mailing and mailing lists in textbooks on direct mail.

The most economical way to change each addressing system to ZIP code is being covered in a series of articles that started in the April 1965 issue of *The Reporter of Direct Mail Adver-*

tising. In this series, each manufacturer of addressing equipment has been asked to detail what steps to take first, second, third, and so on, to prepare the change-over, and how to avoid costly errors or unnecessary steps in making the complete change-over to ZIP codes.

Within the limits of this article, let's consider specific aspects of building, refining and expanding campus lists. Reconsider for a moment your objectives: procuring audiences *and* public support for your institutions. Some day your administration may want to use the lists to send out public relations messages to persuade community leaders. If you build responsive lists for your cultural events, and attract good audiences, you can be that much more confident that other kinds of community support also will be there when you need it.

How do you establish such a list in the first place?

If you are still selling most tickets over the counter or at the box office, then ask your audience to turn in their names and addresses for future announcements. Be aggressive about this. If you merely set out cards in the lobby to be picked up, you'll get only a few filled in at intermission. Instead, have ushers pass out one card to each patron and have the ushers stand at the head of the aisle and circulate during intermissions, asking each individual to turn in his card.

You may even find it doubly useful to get names by passing out questionnaires so your public has a chance to give opinions and suggestions for future programs. It usually takes some persuasion to convince ushers or box office employes of the value of these names. You can easily demonstrate how few names are turned in when you leave it to the initiative of the patrons, compared to active collection by the ushers.

Another way to get additional names is by means of a request and tear-off coupon printed in the program itself.

As you set up your list, start refining it by dating and coding each name according to the specific interest shown. As your lists grow, you can select and mail to each segment instead of the entire list. All those who attend a series of foreign films, for example, are not prospects for a dance recital. Nor will the jazz fans necessarily respond to a chamber music program. After coding the names and addresses, they should still be interfiled in one addressing run. You'll soon find that most patrons have more than one interest.

If your list totals 2,000 to 5,000 you may still find it profitable to send all types of announcements – films, jazz, classical music, dance recitals, and so on – to all of the names anyway. But, when that mailing is made and you have a couple of hundred announcements left over, you can "second mail" these "overs" to the specific segment of the list.

In order to refine your lists, you need to trace mail orders back to their list source.

The best way to do this is to be sure that the order blank for tickets is on the reverse side of the address panel in the case of self-mailers. After all returns are in, tabulate your mail orders and see which parts of the list responded best, whether some parts did not respond at all, and perhaps would not be profitable the next time. Then use the returns to improve your list classifications.

Add the new codes to the old plates where patrons have expressed a new interest. Those responsible for list work can compare the order blank name and address with the addressed side and pick up only the new names and information. If the address panel is not there to check, then all names and addresses must be checked against present lists in order to pick up that percentage that is new.

If it is possible to keep track of the orders you get from each addressee, then you can keep your list up to date according to the amount of business you get from each name. Large mail-order houses do this based on how frequently, how recently, a person has purchased, and how much he buys. If you can't undertake this amount of bookkeeping or research, you should at least know how much business each segment of your mailing list produces by tracing the coded orders.

When the plate address backs up the order blank, you can also use it to keep down duplications. Your mail may be addressed to me as Glenn L. Anderson; if the order blank is sent in and signed by my wife, Ruth, or my daughter, Joan, then a quick check of the address panel will warn you not to put the new names on lists.

Order blanks that can easily be traced to source lists give you an additional advantage when ticket sales are slow.

Daily sales records should tell you when you need more promotion to fill the house. When you do, check the orders already received to find out which segments of your lists have responded well, and mail again to that segment. The selfsame announcement remailed to a productive list will bring returns ranging from 60 to 100 per cent of the original result.

Lists must also grow. People moving out of your area may decrease your lists by 10 per cent and more in a year. How do you expand lists? One way to expand lists *and* increase ticket sales is to mail announcements from time to time in envelopes with two order blanks instead of one. In a recent season subscription mailing for a theater series, an extra order blank increased sales of season subscriptions by 10 per cent with an average sale of 2.8 tickets amounting to $50.40 per order.

Another way to get new names is to leave space on the ticket order blank with a message like, "Please send this and future announcements to the following friends."

A direct appeal to your present lists for recommended names can increase your list totals as much as 10 to 20 per cent, and these names are almost as good as your customer list itself. To get these, you can mail out a double mailing card to your present patrons. The message says in effect that you will be mailing announcements for the new season, that you appreciate their patronage and would like more people

like them in your audience. You ask, would they do you and their friends a favor by sending in recommended names and addresses.

The second half of the double mailing card, the reply half, should be large enough to enter five or six names and addresses. By leaving space for this number, you will receive an average of two to four names per card. If you allow space for only two names, your average will hardly run over one name per reply. It is advisable to compare these recommended names with existing lists before you put them on the prospect list because duplications are bound to be submitted.

Certainly you want the leaders of your community among your patrons, and one way to get them is to use outside lists. Your local Chamber of Commerce will furnish you with lists of social and fraternal groups. From these you might find it worthwhile to select the names and addresses of the officers of these groups — as individuals and community leaders, not as officials of clubs. Entire membership lists do not seem to bring a good response, but may be worth trying in your own town.

A compiled list of outstanding people in your community can be very valuable in terms of ticket sales and public relations.

Some specialized list compilers can furnish hundreds or thousands of such names, depending on the size of your town. Expert compilers can take your present list of patrons, analyze the names according to characteristics such as income, home ownership, educational level, occupation, and others. This research produces a profile of your ideal customer. These list specialists can then go back to the same source material and select hundreds and thousands of names to fit the same profile. As a further refinement, they can even analyze the results of the mailing to the first compiled list, correct the profile, and produce still more refined lists.

Your mailings may not yet warrant the addings of tens of thousands of new prospects, but you can still prospect with a smaller number.

One way to test the value of new prospect names is to date them and put them on a prospect list. Send them all your announcements for a year, and as they become customers, transfer the names to your permanent lists. You can afford to do this with 500 or maybe even 5,000 names.

If you want to test a larger number (5,000 to 10,000), then it might be worthwhile to mail them two or three announcements in which the order blank also carries the alternate choice of buying tickets or marking a box that says, "Please put my name on your mailing list for future announcements." You'll find many of your addressees are well enough schooled in mail-order methods to use this reply coupon.

Another way to pull out the interested minority from a large list is to mail two or three regular announcements. Then follow these announcements with a special mailer. On it, picture the previous announcements so the addressee recalls them. Your message would read to the effect that "we have sent you announcements of some of our campus events that are open to the public. If you wish us to continue mailing these announcements to you, please check and return the reply card attached." In one such prospecting campaign, we picked up 10 per cent of the names for our regular lists, and the whole promotion was more than paid for by the additional ticket sales made by the regular mailings.

Another source of new names is the respective departmental lists of your own college. Find out whether the music department, theater, or other departments have lists and arrange for their use. Correspondence, phone call inquiries, and alumni lists should also be regular sources of new names.

Now that you are building dated and coded lists of patrons and prospects, how do you keep the lists up to date? If you are mailing second-class matter, the postman automatically sends you corrected addresses. Your list clerks should be instructed to make the correction if the new address is in your area, or to kill the plate entirely if the addressee has moved too far away.

A frequent error in list maintenance is the illusion of keeping a card file up to date as your duplicate of the addressing plates themselves.

Filing new cards and taking out old cards is a task usually assigned to a clerk. And the job is put off day after day until at any particular time the card file is days or weeks out of date. Keep in mind that there is only one accurate record of your address list. That record is the plates themselves. A card file kept next to them *might* be up to date, but the further away the card file gets from the only accurate source, the more likely that the card file will be neglected.

Since you should be entering new codes or new dates on existing plates, some record may be essential. In many cases, you can accomplish this by having your list run periodically on galley sheets of 20 or more names per sheet. Galley sheets are easier to use than index cards for making new entries as well as for entering the new codes on the plates.

If your mailings are third class, you will not get postal returns unless you ask for them by printing "Return Requested" on the mailing piece itself. If you mail once a month or oftener, don't put "Return Requested" on every mailer; you'll be paying double on your returns because as a correction comes in you'll already have addressed another piece to the wrong address. Correcting plates takes time; you can avoid mailing out duplicate old addresses by establishing a rule that, as corrections come back, the plate should be pulled out at once. Then, even if the correction takes a day or a week, you will avoid a second mailing to the wrong address.

"Cleaning" mailing lists, eliminating deadwood, sounds so desirable, but it can be overdone.

You can hold prospect and inquiry lists to reasonable size by putting the names on a prospect list first and trans-

ferring them to your customer list only after they buy tickets. Since the prospect names will be dated, you can take them off the lists after several mailings.

But the same approach to cleaning your customer list can be disastrous. A year ago we mailed a card to names that were dated 1960 and 1961. The message was to the effect that we were preparing new announcements and would the addressee please confirm that he still wanted to be on the list by returning the card. About 50 per cent did not return the card. Later, announcements were sent to them anyway and results compared. We made the same profitable percentage of sales to them as to the "active" customer list. Needless to say, those names went back on the list. Customer names are too valuable to throw away, and any cleaning of customer lists should be approached carefully.

Depending on your objective, whether it is to keep as many as possible on your lists, or to get as many as possible *off* your lists, you can slant your list-cleaning mailings either way. If you want to trim only a small number from an active and profitable list, then your message might say that the addressee should return the card only if he no longer wants to be on the list or will be unable to attend any campus event in the next year. Such a mailer may bring a 10 per cent return and reduce that list 10 per cent.

On the other hand, if you tell the addressee he *must* return the card *if* he wishes to stay on the list and names will be dropped if the card is not returned, then you'll still get something like a 10 per cent or perhaps 20 per cent return. But, you'll have to drop 80 to 90 per cent of your list and will undoubtedly be dropping some potentially valuable customers. That's mail order for you. Handled well, your list is a gold mine. ■

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